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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000089

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: UFR OPPOSITION LEADER MEETS WITH AMBASSADOR,  
PREPARES FOR ELECTIONS

REF: CONAKRY 0068

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Under the leadership of Sidya Toure, the Union Force Republican (UFR) party continues to prepare for elections, despite the lack of an actual election date. At the same time, Toure seems convinced that the only true solution to Guinea,s political problems is the removal of President Conte. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) During his first official meeting with Sidya Toure, president of the Union Force Republican (UFR) party on January 31, Ambassador Carter highlighted the USG,s overarching policy priorities in Guinea: economic reform, elections, and good governance. A handful of senior UFR party members were also present during the meeting, as well as Poloff. Toure served as prime minister of Guinea from 1996 to 1999 until he was dismissed by President Conte amid rumors of coup plotting.

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THE REGIME MUST CHANGE  
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¶3. (C) In response to the Ambassador,s comments on policy priorities, Toure said that he remains convinced that nothing will get better as long as President Conte remains in office. He agreed that the IMF program is critical to development and noted that he was responsible for the previous IMF program that was dropped after Conte dismissed him from office. However, Toure emphasized that poor leadership is Guinea,s underlying problem. He said that he agreed with the Ambassador on the need for economic reforms and the importance of the IMF program, but that he could not support debt reduction when it will only redistribute funds to corrupt officials.

¶4. (C) Turning to elections, Toure agreed that elections should be a priority. At the same time, he said that the legislative elections will not address the underlying problem. We need a regime change,, he said, and these elections are not going to do that., According to Toure, the UFR essentially has two priorities: change of regime and elections. However, Toure said that there are many elements blocking elections and that some of these elements may be surprising., He said that the National Assembly clearly does not want elections, Conte does not want elections, and it is also likely that the prime minister does not want elections either because he does not know what he will be doing after the elections.,

¶5. (C) Building on comments made to Poloff on January 23 (reftel) regarding Guinea,s current political situation, Toure told the Ambassador that the country must organize a

national roundtable for dialogue. He added that the Committee de Suivi and the Watchdog Committee are not important. For Toure, the national roundtable will help everyone identify the current regime as the problem.

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WE ARE MULTI-ETHNIC  
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16. (SBU) In response to a question on ethnically based political alliances, Toure said that he is the least concerned of anyone you will talk to., According to Toure, the UFR is balanced ethnically and does not represent a single ethnic group. We are the only party that is represented in all four of Guinea,s regions,, he said. However, Toure said that the ethnic issue is a concern. He noted that ethnic divisions were much less of a problem in the past and it has only been in the last year that they have begun to play a prominent role, which he attributed to intentionally manipulative strategies on the part of various political actors. Toure said that this is an issue he raises every time the opposition political parties get together.

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GETTING READY FOR THE PARTY CONVENTION  
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17. (SBU) Ambassador Carter emphasized that while the USG is working to promote democracy, it is important that various actors themselves demonstrate democratic principles, including the political parties. In that vein, the Ambassador asked Toure to explain how the UFR is working to build democratic structures within its own organization. Toure said that they are planning to hold regional party

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conventions in February in order to start developing their candidate list. He said that once those are completed and an elections date is set, they will organize a national convention to finalize the list. With good humor, Toure told the Ambassador that we will be sure you get an invitation.,

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND ELECTIONS  
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18. (SBU) Another concern for Toure, related to the elections, is the lack of progress towards an investigation of the alleged human rights abuses committed by security forces in early 2007. He said that members of opposition political parties were killed during previous elections. According to Toure, progress on the national investigation would help create a sense of calm and instill confidence, helping people to believe that the Guinean Government will follow through on promises to prosecute those individuals responsible for violating human rights. He said that failure to do so could contribute to insecurity during the elections.

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COMMENT  
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19. (C) Toure continues to prepare for elections although he appears convinced that legislative elections will not solve Guinea,s political problems. For Toure, the only answer is to remove the president ) everything else is just background noise. Many of Toure,s themes remained constant to the ideas he discussed with Poloff on January 23. However, linking the success of the Human Rights Investigatory Commission to the overall security atmosphere for the elections is a useful new line of thought. END COMMENT.  
CARTER